to think among themselves and come to a conclusion. It is not left to the Chairman.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, there was a war against the people yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Doubling of Mangalapuram-Shoranur Rail Line

*664. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far in doubling of the rail line from Mangalapuram to Shoranur; and

(b) by when the work would be completed at the present rate of progress?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) and (b) The position is as under.

The following sections have already been opened for passenger traffic from the dates shown against each:

1.	Calicut-West Hill	07.09.97
2.	West Hill-Elathur	12.09.97
3.	Quilandi-Tikkotti	13.08.97
4.	Ullal-Netravathy	25.11.98
5.	Kasargod-Kumbla-Uppala	17.5.99
6.	Payyangadi-Payanur-Cheruvathur	05.03.2000

Work is at an advanced stage on the following sections and they are expected to be commissioned during the year 2000-2001:

1. Elathur-Quilandi
2. Tikkotti-badagara
3. Badagara-Mahe-Tellicherry
4. Tellicherry-Ettakkot
5. Ettakkot-Cannanore-South-Cannanore

6. Cannanore-Valapattinam-Kannapuram

7. Kannapuram-Payyangadi

8. Cheravathur-Nileshwar

9. Nileshwar-Kanhangad

10. Kanhangad-Kottikulam

11. Kottikulam-Kasargod

Work on long lead items on the rest of the sections has also been taken up. The work on the remaining sections will be completed in the coming years subject to availability of resources.

Optical Fibre network of the Railways

*665. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Board is interacting with the DTS for help in identifying appropriate private companies for leasing out the Railways Optical Fibre Network and the right of way along Railway tracks;

(b) if so, whether this is proposed to be done through the MoU route or an open tendering process; and

(c) what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Railway Board have neither taken any help from DTS (Department of Telecom Services) nor are they interacting with DTS for identifying appropriate private companies for leasing out Railway's optical fibre network and right of way along the Railway tracks. As announced in Railway Budget 2000-2001, Railway have taken a decision to build a nation-wide broadband telecom and multimedia network by laying optical fibre cables along 62,800 route KM of Railway track by utilising their right of way. The scheme will be implemented through a professionally-managed corporation being set up. Railways are taking action for creation of the Corporation including, inter alia, selection of Consultancy Firm for developing a business plan for the corporation and its activities. Further course of action will be finalised thereafter.